

## BANK ROBBERIES.

A Detective's Story of their Tricks and Ingenuity—How they Operate—What Tools and Time it Takes to Open a Safe.

(From the Brooklyn Eagle.)

The performances of the bank burglars strike the community with alarming affect, owing to their extensive character. The thieves seldom attack a bank without having first possessed themselves of some knowledge of what is to be gained by success. The act of burglary is an investment from which large fruition is expected. It costs the burglars less thought as to how they will cover their tracks than as to how they will go through with the job of getting at the bonds or money in the vaults. Still, their retreat is frequently as bold and audacious as their attack.

Allan Pinkerton has had a greater and more varied experience with bank thieves in all parts of the country than any other living detective, and, it may be added, has been more successful in outwitting them, recovering their booty, and in bringing them to justice. Having made a close study of the burglars and their ways and means, the results of his observations can not fail to be instructive to the general reader, and especially to all who place constant reliance upon the security of safes and their combinations. Mr. Pinkerton says one of the most common methods of opening safes has been by drilling and blasting with powder, gun-cotton, and occasionally nitro-glycerine. With the ordinary fire-proof safes the common drill is sufficient, but with chilled iron and Franklinites, which can not be touched with a steel drill, diamond dust and emery are effectively used by the thieves.

It has also been a practice to draw the temper of hardened irons with thimble-pipe, consisting of a spirit and oil lamp and bellows especially made for the purpose. This is quickly done, after which the safe may be drilled with a common steel drill.

Astute burglars make a practice of acquainting themselves thoroughly with all the particulars of the construction of safes, as well as of their locks, and some safes have been opened by drilling out all the riveting of the inner lining, and of the bolts and lock which fasten the same to the shell of the door, obtaining the position of these rivets by exact measurement from the outside.

Some safes are so constructed as to leave no receptacle for powder or blasting material, except in certain apertures of the lock, but so well acquainted with their mechanism do the thieves become as to be able, by measurement from the outside, to know exactly where to place their drills.

The most ordinary safes have been made to yield to the ordinary jack-screw, which is applied in two ways, either by drilling a hole in the door, generally about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, then with a screw-tap cutting a thread for a slightly tapering steel screw, which, by a lever, is made to tightly fit into the hole. An attachment is then made with the screw and jack, the latter being supported by a rough frame, and held from the safe with timbers placed against the jambs, when the shell of the door is pulled out by main force, breaking the rivets. The other method of using the jack-screw is to force the door inward, breaking it into pieces that are easily removed by the jimmy. When an abutment for the jack-screw can not be obtained by placing the timbers against a solid partition or other object, a brace is obtained by securing a long timber to the floor, and blocking up the other end, so as to be in a position central to the door of the safe; against and between this and the door the jack is placed.

Many safe doors have also been opened by means of wedges, principally used in forcing off the frames around the panels. Very fine steel wedges are first used, then larger ones, as the aperture becomes sufficient to receive them.

A great many fire-proof safes throughout the country have been opened simply with the pick and jimmy. With safes that are manufactured of ordinary plate iron, all that is necessary is, first with several well-directed blows of a pick to make an aperture just sufficient to receive the sharp end of the jimmy in one corner of the panel, then with the jimmy the iron is ripped and torn the whole length of the panel and laid back, exposing the filling. The latter is picked out in a few moments. The bent end of the jimmy is then inserted behind the bolt, and the same pried back by main force, breaking the wards

in the lock. This operation has frequently been performed in from fifteen to twenty minutes.

Thieves have adopted a good many ingenious ways of picking locks, and some of them have attained a delicacy of feeling by which they have been able to determine, with fine instruments, the exact distance it was necessary to raise each tumbler; but of late years many of the locks have been especially constructed with the view of foiling anything of this kind. Tumbler locks, requiring large keys, have been opened by forcing around in them a blank steel key, breaking the wards and forcing back the bolt.

The combination of the dial lock can be found out by placing under the back of the dials a small, peculiarly manufactured ratchet, so that at every reverse motion of the knob a small puncture is made on a plate upon which it moves, or upon a disk of paper especially secured to it for the purpose of receiving these impressions or pictures. A celebrated burglar, in getting at the vaults and safes of a noted bank, had two of these combination dial locks to open, and did all his work in one night.

It is a favorite plan of some expert thieves, in committing heavy bank robberies, to ascertain by watching where the cashier sleeps, cautiously getting access to his room at night, either through an unsecured window or by turning with nippers the key in his bedroom door, and taking wax impressions of the keys to his office, vault and safe. From these impressions exact duplicates are easily made, and the thief then operates at his leisure, making the attack when he thinks the proper opportunity has arrived to secure the greatest amount of plunder.

A method which has been in practice for a number of years, and a very successful one in opening vaults, is by securing an adjoining room, and getting through the ceiling, floor or partition into the vault. If the vaults are iron-plated, the plating is penetrated in a very short time by the use of drills and thin saws. An aperture sufficiently large for the egress of a single man can then be cut through one-quarter inch iron in about four hours. After access is obtained to the vaults, the safes are opened by any of the numerous appliances suitable to the circumstances.

Thieves traveling through the country have a very ingenious, simple, but effective way of ascertaining whether there is a night watchman inside the bank, without subjecting themselves to any danger of being noticed in watching for this purpose. It is that of putting a small wedge between the door and the jamb in the evening after the bank is closed, and by observing if this wedge still remains there before the bank is opened in the morning.

In the cases of bank robberies, the final work is generally done between Saturday night and Sunday morning. The tools used by professional thieves are such as are commonly used by mechanics, excepting the "jimmy," which, for the heavier work, is made in several sections screwed together when it is required for use, being then about the size of the ordinary crow-bar.

In response to a request for some cases of an unusual and peculiar manner, Mr. Pinkerton talks freely.

Some years since a decent-looking man called upon the cashier of a large bank in a seaport town, desiring to rent the cellar and basement underneath the bank for the purpose of an oyster store. The stranger was accepted as a tenant, and the oyster business was begun, and flourished for about seven months. The rent was paid promptly every month, and that was all the bank people expected. One fine morning the banker woke up to learn that the bank had been entered; moneys, securities and all were gone—a clean job. The vault was "burglar proof," the safes "the very best," but our honest oystermen had silently worked their way up into both, commencing below and going through the bottom of the vault. Indeed, they had it all their own way, and had taken their time, as well as the contents of the vault, which they had reached without much trouble. The banker was, of course, horrified to learn that the vault and safe were not "burglar proof."

A dentist applied to the officers of a bank in a large town for rooms over the bank. A rental was agreed upon, and the rooms were fitted up in the most luxurious style. Customers were scarce, but the dentist always remarked: "Commencing business is always uphill work, but patience will insure suc-

cess in the end." The bank clerks had their bad teeth treated and plugged, and the new neighbor was pronounced a master of his business. The dentist had visiting friends, who remained in his room very late at night; but that was not extraordinary, for he was of a sociable disposition. For many months he struggled along. At length, one Monday morning, after the bank was opened for the business of the day, the door of the vault refused to open. Upon examination it was ascertained that the bank had been robbed. The ceiling of the vault was found to have been torn out, the pieces of which had been carried out by the dentist's friends, a circumstance which at once accounted for their bulky pockets. The dentist and his confederates had worked their way through the floor of his office, carrying away the debris as fast as made. Copper-headed mallets, chisels, blow-pipe and drills soon mastered the "invulnerable steel burglar-proof safe," a little powder finished the work, and the immense treasures were reached and carried away by our pseudo-dentist and his confederates, who left for less exposed regions, having succeeded in drawing, if not the teeth, the wool over the eyes of the bank people.

Two celebrated burglars visited a pleasant interior Eastern town some time since. They drove into town with a fine, dashing team, put up at the best hotel in the place, remained several days, and transacted a little business at the bank, changing large bills for small ones, etc. They had pleasant conversations with the cashier and clerks, who thought them very agreeable men, indeed. During their stay in the town they observed the movements of every person connected with the bank. They ascertained that by 11 o'clock at night the town people went to bed, and by midnight silence prevailed. There were no policemen. One dark and stormy night, just after this time, the cashier of the bank was surprised in his bed. He was awakened out of a sound sleep by several men all in disguise, one of whom ordered him to dress. They then gagged him. They gagged his wife and the other occupants of the house. The cashier was ordered to deliver the key of the bank safe. His refusal was met with a cold revolver pressed to his forehead. He relented and delivered the key. Subsequently they took him to the bank and made him unlock the safe himself. He was sent back to the house, and the family was kept guarded until a detachment of thieves robbed the bank. When the work was finished, the cashier's family was admonished not to stir, under pain of death. The cashier and his wife could not help remarking that "they" (the thieves) "behaved very gentlemanly."

### On the War Path.

Passengers from Fort Sill, who arrived by the stage at Caddo yesterday, report that the Kiowa and Comanche tribes of Indians had left their reservations and gone on the war path.

They have already commenced depredating on the Texas settlements. The fact that six buffalo hunters are reported killed will cause some uneasiness in this community, as ex-Mayor Winn and several other well known Denisonians are on the "range."

### LATER.

About 800 U. S. Soldiers have left Fort Sill and gone in pursuit of the Indians.—Denison News, 10th.

Advices from Fort Sill state that the Indians have been greatly discontented for two months, and that recently 2000 started southward, and were soon heard from as depredating. Their excuse was that they had been starved at the agency, and proposed to kill such cattle as they need for sustenance. The military were sent after them, and they were overtaken on the boundary between the Indian Territory and Texas. Gen. Sheridan has telegraphed permission to issue beef to them until further instructions. The Indians are mainly Comanches, Apaches and Kiowas.—Galveston News.

"Twenty-five carriages at a funeral!" exclaimed McGee's Catholic Illustrated Weekly, "and the next day the dead man's widow was wearily going from house to house trying to collect sufficient money to purchase a sewing machine. The cost of the funeral would have made her little family comfortable for several months, but the friends who had mourned the day before in vehicles at five dollars each discovered that they couldn't afford to help her after the outlay they had incurred in paying respect to her husband!"

### Captured by Indians.

Deep interest is taken here in the narrative of Mrs. Charles Jones, of Washington county, Iowa, who arrived with her son last night, and whose story of suffering on the plains, with the astonishing revelations regarding certain Indians of the Yankton Agency, has few parallels in frontier history. Mrs. Jones and her son, it is believed, are the sole survivors of a party of twelve emigrants who left Washington county last February for the Yellowstone valley. They reached Fort Kearney about March 1, 1878, and when a few days out from there, in the river bottom, they were surrounded by a party of seventy Indians. William Brown, Joshua Brown, and Joseph Hyatt, a brother of Mrs. Jones, constituting the men of the party, were instantly shot dead. All the others were taken into captivity. All but Mrs. Jones and her son disappeared, and, as she believes, were massacred.

She became a slave to the Chief named Yankton, cooking, picking berries, and performing other menial offices. She was never allowed to meet or speak to her son. Her clothes were taken from her and replaced by blanket and moccasins. The camp was moved often and always north. The warriors several times left the party and brought back clothing and plunder, evidently taken from murdered whites. The interpreter who was with the party, named Glines, stated that he had been captured from a party of emigrants at the age of 11 years, and he was then 40. He adopted their life, became a Catholic, and received his education at a Jesuit college. He told Mrs. Jones that the party were chiefly Yanktons, from the Yankton Agency, but some were from Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies. They were out during every summer, and returned to the agencies in winter.

Their slaves are kept outside the agencies in concealment. Other female white slaves in the party told her, through the interpreter, that their friends had been murdered, and, as they had no homes, they had no desire to escape. Young Jones, who is aged 15, became a favorite and was kindly treated. At the expiration of two months they reached the neighborhood of a small village in Northern Nebraska, where the Indians procured liquor, and all became drunk. That night Mrs. Jones escaped, having on only a ragged blanket and one moccasin. She traveled south, being guided in her course by the stars, and subsisting for many days on raw artichokes. After five or six days she met occasional emigrant wagons moving north, and Mrs. Jones was given a dress. She begged her way through the State, reaching home in Iowa the last day of June.

Here she procured a small sum of money. She became alarmed at the uncertainty of her son's fate and returned to Central Nebraska, where she traveled from place to place, watching for emigrants from the north and living with farmers. At the expiration of many weeks, sick and disheartened, she again started eastward. One day last October, while walking through Kearney, she met an emaciated lad whom she recognized as her son, who had just come in from a long and terrible journey. Sheltered by James Carmichael, a farmer, she watched at her son's bedside through a long illness. When the boy had partially recovered they both started east on foot, stopping with farmers and making slow progress on account of their enfeebled condition.

Citizens have collected some money, and sent both home this morning. Every detail of the above story is confirmed. The naked bodies of three murdered men were found last March on the plains north of Kearney, but the murders were supposed to be the work of tramps. Men here from the agencies are preparing to investigate the matter, and express the opinion that many of the agency Indians have kept up the systematic murder of settlers during the summer and successfully concealing their crime. At the Yankton Agency there will be an immediate investigation, and the identity of the Indians secured, if possible.

### Things I Like to See.

I like to see whole neighborhoods get into a quarrel about nothing; it shows there are independent spirits in the world.

I like to hear the character of my friends slandered; it gives me a chance to defend them.

I like to hear long prayers on Sundays; I can sleep better during the remainder of the exercise.

I like to be praised to my face; it makes me think I am no fool.

I like to hear religious denominations slander each other; it is conclusive evidence that their cause is good, and that

they are taking the best possible means to advance it.

I like to see fifteen or twenty young men parade themselves in front of meeting-houses on the Sabbath, and stare at the ladies as they pass; it shows that they have read Chatterfield's advice to his son.

I like to see young ladies laugh and play at religious meetings; it shows they possess fine feelings; and take an interest in serious matters.

I like to be surrounded by a lot of idlers when I am in a hurry; it learns me to be patient.

I like to have a person ask me the news, and before I have time to speak, answer himself; it shows he knows more than I do myself.

I like to see the church members aroused from slumber to partake of the sacrament; it shows the spirit is willing but the body is weak.

I like to see people haunt the hotels on the Sabbath, talking politics and scandal; it shows that the day is regarded.

I like to hear the bells toll half the time; it tells strangers that we have some.

I like to see people ride for pleasure, go fishing or hunting on Sunday; the better the day, the better the deed.

I like to see young ladies walk out late at night, it shows they are not a little afraid.

I like to have a man take a book or paper out of my hands without asking; it shows he knows manners.

I like to have a man prying into my business; it shows he has an inquiring mind.

I like to see a man in company engross the whole conversation; it shows he thinks himself a very smart fellow.

I like to see young ladies assemble at a window or door to make witty remarks upon people as they pass; it shows they want to talk of something they can't think of.

I like to see a young gentleman have an exalted opinion of himself; he is sure there is one that thinks well of him.

I like to see young ladies slander each other; it is a sign their characters stand fair.

I like to see one praise himself; it saves one the trouble of doing it for him.

I like to see a man take pains to discommodate the public for the purpose of extorting money for some benevolent object; it shows he means to make the people generous, *et cetera*.

I like to see two red-headed sisters quarrel and fight about their sweetheart; it shows that they are spunky.

There are a number of pleasant things too numerous to mention. At present, let the above suffice.

### A Newspaper Man's Experience.

He is a prominent newspaper man and parts his hair in the middle. The part is over five inches wide which gives him an innocent cast of countenance. To those who know him not he might be considered verdant in appearance. He was riding in a sleeper on the Central Pacific railroad, and fell into an innocent little game of pedro with a colonel, professor and a doctor. During an animated conversation and a quiet deal, three aces were thrown on his side of the table, after which one of the greatest coolness, "I wish we were playing poker. I don't know that I have been favored with such a hand for years." Our editorial friend saw the game, looked up innocently and remarked:

"I have been favored also. I have a pretty good poker hand myself."

The three looked at each other as he continued thusly:

"They call you Professor?"

"Yes."

"They call you Colonel?"

"Yes."

"You are from the East, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Well, gentlemen," he continued rising, "you had better take the next train back. We meet it just the other side of Battle Mountain. You can't make a cent at this. They have been teaching it in the Sunday schools in California for years."

We have always felt that for the millions music could never accomplish its great mission until every one was able to read it at sight, just as we read our books and newspapers. Accomplish that, and what marvelous things might be done in cheering and elevating our common life by this precious gift from God, the ministry of music! What a mighty force for good would be found here, in the church and the mission room, in the school and the social circle, in the city warehouse and the village club!—Exchange.